

1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13
Separation Anxiety
February 25, 2024
Sermon 4

Welcome ☞ Continue 1 Thess ☞ letter of Paul to young church ☞ Relationship unfold

Welcome this morning church! We continue on in our series through 1 Thessalonians this morning and as we read the letter of Paul to the young Thessalonica church, we begin to see this relationship unfold.

Last week Pastor Steve ☞ Took us through ch. 2 ☞ Language used (mother, father, brother)

Last week when Pastor Steve took us through chapter 2 we saw the language used to describe Paul as a mother, a father and a brother to the church.

When you think of these relationships ☞ Care goes into ☞ Healthy growth of a child

When you think of these relationships to a young child there is a lot of care that goes into raising and encouraging them. The healthy growth of a child relies on these various relationships to navigate the world.

As I mentioned...Thessalonica church is only 2-3 years old at time of Paul's letter

As I mentioned a couple of weeks ago, the Thessalonica church is only 2 or 3 years old at the time of Paul's encouraging letter to them.

This church is in the toddler stage of its maturity.

Paul's letter to Corinthian church in 1 Cor 3 ☞ Mere infants in Christ

In Paul's letter to the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 3 he refers to the church as 'mere infants in Christ.'

Metaphorically speaking ☞ Paul gave milk not solid food ☞ Cor church was quarreling

Metaphorically speaking Paul said he was giving them milk not solid food because they weren't ready for it. In the case of the Corinthian church, they were quarreling within the congregation.

Not the case with the Thes. church but they were young ☞ Not rooted b/c of lack of maturity

This wasn't necessarily the case with the Thessalonian church however they were still young and were not rooted deeply because of their lack of maturity.

Daddy daughter dance ☞ Dinner ☞ Brussel sprouts ☞ Unsure

Paul's nurturing and guiding ☞ was to help the Thes. Church stand firm against persecution

Paul's nurturing and guiding encouragement was to help the Thessalonian church stand firm in the face of persecution and give them assurance of their eternal salvation in Christ.

Turn with me in our next section in 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13. I have titled this sermon "Separation Anxiety"

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¹⁷ But, brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned by being separated from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. ¹⁸ For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan blocked our way. ¹⁹ For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? ²⁰ Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

³ So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. ² We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God's service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, ³ so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. For you know quite well that we are destined for them. ⁴ In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know. ⁵ For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter had tempted you and that our labors might have been in vain.

Timothy's Encouraging Report

⁶ But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you. ⁷ Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. ⁸ For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. ⁹ How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? ¹⁰ Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

¹¹ Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. ¹² May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. ¹³ May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

Pray

All have probably been separated ☐ Lost, misplaced or taken ☐ Constant thought

All of us have probably been separated from something that we value or love dearly. We can all probably think of something that we have lost or misplaced or was taken and how we are always searching for it. That constant thought of where it may be constantly runs through our head.

Truck keys

This happened to us with a set of our truck keys. For a year and a half we searched for these keys. They weren't just any set of keys. Our truck key has a built in fab and 6 months prior the

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cost to make the key was \$350. This was a highly overpriced key but the backup key was falling a part. We had no idea where this key was.

Truck keys

A year and a half later we were lending out a tote of laser tag guns and in the bottom of that tote was our keys. We had been within feet of the keys many times but never made it to the bottom of the tote where our keys somehow ended up.

Likewise ☒ Separated from a loved one

Likewise, we have all probably been separated from a loved one and how our heart can ache to be near them once again.

We hear this yearning from Paul in his separation anxiety from the Thes. church

We hear this yearning from Paul in his separation from the Thessalonian church in which he loves so much and longs to be with again.

1 Thessalonians 2:17-18

¹⁷ But, brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned by being separated from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. ¹⁸ For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan blocked our way.

Just as 1 Thes. Ch. 1 is a defense of Paul's ministry ☐ Defense for their absence

Just as 1 Thessalonians 1:1-12 is a defense of Paul and his fellow missionaries during their work in Thessalonica, these verses are a defense of their later absence.

After only a brief absence, he wants to be with them.

The phrase, "We made every effort" conveys a depth of feeling amounting to eagerness, an eagerness heightened by separation.

Paul's words debunk rumors about him not caring, not returning

Paul's warm words about his feelings for the Thessalonians may reflect rumors that he did not really care for them. Apparently, some had said that he had no interest in coming back to them and that he had come the first time only to satisfy selfish ambition.

Paul proceeds to prove his longing to see them.

Though Timothy and Silas returned ☐ Paul attempted to visit multiple times

Though Timothy and Silas had already returned to Thessalonica, Paul's failure to do so did not come from lack of intention; he in fact attempted a visit several times.

What hindered? ☐ Satanic hinderance

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What could have hindered such intense desire? It must be nothing less than Satanic hindrance.

Unknown specifically what hindered □ A possible reason...

It is unknown what specifically it was that hindered Paul's visit to Thessalonica. A possible reason to this hindrance might be related to the thorn in his side that he refers to in...

2 Corinthians 12:7

⁷ Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself!

Satan plays an active role in hindering the Gospel message

What is clear however is that Satan plays an active role in hindering the Gospel message from reaching those who are lost.

Satan wants to distort, confuse, mix up, blur and bewilder lost people from receiving the truth of Jesus Christ.

One of Satan's greatest plays is deception.

Satan will use enough truth to cause it to not be outlandish but distort it enough to be false.

2 Corinthians 11:12-15

¹² And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about. ¹³ For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. ¹⁵ It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness.

Senior citizens lost almost \$1 billion in scams in 2020, according to an FBI report released in June of 2021. A total of 105,301 people over the age of 65 were scammed, with an average loss of \$9,175, and almost 2,000 older Americans lost more than \$100,000, the report said.

Satan looks to take advantage of our weak spots.

Satan knew the weak spots of the Thes. Church □ might believe counterfeits □ about Paul

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Satan knew that the Thessalonica church was young and impressionable and might believe a simple counterfeit lie so if he could get the congregation to believe that Paul didn't care about them and caused them to question the hope that they are putting their trust in he may cause some to fall away.

There is a reason why we tell our kids not to talk to strangers. They are young and easily deceived.

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20

¹⁹ For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? ²⁰ Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

Rhetorical questions ☞ Tie Thes. to Jesus' coming and presence

Paul's rhetorical questions tie the Thessalonians into his anticipation of the Lord Jesus' coming and presence.

Paul interrupts his own question and anticipates the answer: "Is it not you?"

This is Paul's answer to those who said he did not care for the Thessalonian Christians.

Reward for Paul's ministry was not ☞ money, prestige, fame ☞ new believers, changed lives

The ultimate reward for Paul's ministry was not money, prestige, or fame, but new believers whose lives had been changed by God through the preaching of the Gospel. This was why he longed to see them.

Christians should have ministries ☞ involved in one ☞ Always involve the Gospel ☞ vain

If you are a Christian, you should have a ministry. It should always resolve in sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If it is anything less than that, your ministry is being carried out in vain.

Not to be critical ☞ To reflect

This isn't to be critical of the ministry that the Lord has given you but so that you reflect upon it and how you can use opportunities to share the Gospel message to those who are lost.

In your ministry your highest reward should be those who come to believe ☞ are growing

No matter what ministry God has given to you, your highest reward and greatest joy should be those who come to believe in Christ and are growing in him.

1 Thessalonians 3:1-4

¹ So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. ² We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God's service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, ³ so that no

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one would be unsettled by these trials. For you know quite well that we are destined for them. ⁴In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know.

People tie troubles to sin and lack of faith □ could be God's plan for believers

Some think that troubles are always caused by sin or a lack of faith. Trials may be a part of God's plan for believers.

Paul's constant thorn □ Not literal □ Possible ailment as a reminder □ humility

I mentioned earlier of Paul's trials with the constant thorn in his side. Paul's thorn wasn't a literal thorn but an ailment of some sort that was a constant reminder of the humility he needed before Christ.

Experiencing problems and persecutions will build your character.

James 1:2-4

²Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Experiencing problems and persecutions can build perseverance.

Romans 5:3-5

³Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Experiencing problems and persecutions can build empathy for others who also face trials.

This is how many ministries are started today. God uses our troubles and persecutions to create ministry.

Look at the beginnings of most ministries. How did they get started?

2 Corinthians 1:3-7

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. ⁵For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. ⁶If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. ⁷And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

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Culture lusts worry free environments ☐ Problems may be sign of effective living

Our culture today lusts after worry free environments where we are always comfortable. Many of us know however that problems are unavoidable for God's people. Your troubles may be a sign of effective Christian living.

Some turn to God thinking avoid world problems ☐ No promise ☐ Power to grow

Some people turn to God with the hope of escaping suffering on earth. God doesn't promise this, however. Instead, he gives us power to grow through our sufferings. The Christian life involves obedience to Christ despite temptations and hardships.

1 Thessalonians 3:5

⁵For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter had tempted you and that our labors might have been in vain.

Culture downplays Satan ☒ Satan wants this ☒ Wants us to keep our guard down

Our culture tends to downplay the impact of Satan, known here in this verse as the tempter. This is exactly what Satan wants. He wants us to keep our guard down and minimize Christ's power and influence.

Satan is the most powerful of the evil spirits. His power can affect the spiritual world.

Ephesians 2:1-3

¹As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ²in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

His power can also affect the physical world.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

^{7b}Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. ¹⁰That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

This seems defeating until we understand that we have a God who lives in us who has already defeated Satan. We must take up the armor he has equipped us with.

Ephesians 6:10-12

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¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

How often do we get wrapped up in flesh and blood ☐ Battle against dark forces

How often do we find ourselves getting wrapped up in matters over flesh and blood? Our battle is not against flesh and blood it is against the spiritual dark forces of this world.

Even Jesus had an attempted tempting by the tempter in Matthew 4:1-11.

Matthew 4:1-11

⁴ Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

⁴ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

"He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."

⁷ Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

We can see the playbook of Satan in this text as it plays out.

Satan uses the following ingredients to tempt Jesus and does the same to tempt us:

Real needs ☐ Our possible doubts ☐ Potential weaknesses

1. Satan tried to tempt Jesus in His weakest moment when he was hungry and tired.
 - a. Real need – Physical hunger
 - b. Possible doubt – Would God provide food?
 - c. Potential weakness – Hunger, impatience and his need to "prove his Sonship to Satan"

I can tell you what, when I am hungry, and Satan throws an apple pie in front of me...there is some serious spiritual warfare going on.

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2. Satan was mocking the power of God with misapplied scripture in Psalm 91:11-12
 - a. Real need – Emotional security
 - b. Possible doubt – Would God protect?
 - c. Potential weakness – Pride, insecurity, need to test God

This is a really important point. Satan used scripture to try to convince Jesus to sin!

Sometimes people give attractive reasons ☒ Wrong ☒ Support w/ out of context scripture

Sometimes friends or associates will present attractive and convincing reasons why you should try something you know is wrong. They may even find Bible verses that *seem* to support their viewpoint.

Study the word carefully

Study the Bible carefully, especially the broader contexts of specific verses, so that you understand God's principles for living and what he wants for your life.

When your fully understand you can recognize errors in interpretation

Only if you really understand what the whole bible says will you be able to recognize errors of interpretation when people take verses out of context and twist them to say what they want them to say.

3. Satan tried to get Jesus to worship him.
 - a. Real need – Psychological significance, power and achievement
 - b. Possible doubt – Would God rule?
 - c. Potential weakness – Desire for quick power, easy solutions, need to prove equality with God.

You have to remember that Jesus is fully man and fully God so He feels the full weight of the temptation that Satan was laying heavy on Him.

Christ gives us his playbook to responding to temptations:

1. Go to the word
2. Go to the word
3. Go to the word

*We of course should always be in prayer!

Jesus responds with each of Satan's 3 temptations with

1. Deuteronomy 8:3
2. Deuteronomy 6:16
3. Deuteronomy 6:13

So what is the takeaway?

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So what is the takeaway? Don't skip over Deuteronomy. It just may be what you need to resist the devil.

Actual takeaway

The actual takeaway is the more you know, understand and memorize scripture the more you will recognize when there is a counterfeit that presents itself.

Paul's worry for the Thes. Church ☒ Susceptible to deception

This was Paul's very worry with the young Thessalonica church. He knew that they were susceptible to the deception of the tempter.

Paul gets good news as Timothy returns from his visit to Thessalonica.

1 Thessalonians 3:6

⁶ But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you.

Timothy "brought good news" about the Thessalonians. This verb is reserved almost exclusively for gospel preaching.

Timothy's report assures Paul

Timothy's report of the compassionate feelings of the Thessalonians toward him assured Paul that they had **not written him off as an exploiter**, disinterested in their welfare. They still maintained a warm spot for him, matching his own tender longing to see them.

1 Thessalonians 3:7-8

⁷ Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. ⁸ For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord.

We have all experienced adversity ☐ Knowing there are others who love and care

We have all experienced adversity in the form of physical distress and suffering but when we know that there are others around who love and care for us it helps us to get through it knowing we are not alone.

The report encouraged Paul in his adversity. He was facing physical distress and suffering inflicted by his antagonists.

Like all believers in Christ, Paul was called to suffer persecution!

2 Timothy 3:12

¹² In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

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It was their faith that encouraged Paul and the fact that they were “standing firm in the Lord.”

The perseverance of the Thes. Church spurred on Paul to do the same

Since they were depending on God for help against impossible obstacles, Paul himself felt an additional incentive to do this in his own life.

Paul was also a human who's faith would be tested in times of trial. By not only leaning on the truth of God he also gained strength from his fellow believers.

Romans 1:12

¹² that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.

2 Corinthians 7:4

⁴ I have spoken to you with great frankness; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.

2 Corinthians 7:13

¹³ By all this we are encouraged.

In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you.

This is why the enemy likes to target effective churches and Christians. If Satan can disrupt the encouragement and divide, believers feel isolated and lonely.

1 Thessalonians 3:9

⁹ How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? ¹⁰ Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

Great joy to a Christian when another comes to faith

It brings great joy to a Christian to see another person come to faith in Christ and mature in that faith.

Along with Paul's rejoicing he prayed continually for the Thes. ☐ “Night and Day”

Along with Paul's rejoicing, he prayed continually for the Thessalonians. “Night and day” does not mean once in the evening and once in the morning, nor that he did nothing else but pray. It rather points to the extreme frequency of his prayers, while the phrase “most earnestly” refers to the intensity of his prayers.

If I asked for a show of hands of how many of us could improve upon our prayer life, I would expect most hands to go up.

We see later in Paul's final instructions in

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

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¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

The thrust of Paul's petitions for the Thessalonians is twofold:

1. that "we may see you"
2. "supply what is lacking in your faith,"

Paul uses this time in his letter to remind them that he is there as a teacher to

- correct
- restore
- and equip them in their faith

Already commended in chapter 1:3 □ **Paul assures them he will remain to help**

They had already been commended for "their work produced by their faith" in chapter 1:3. Yet they had room for additional growth and Paul felt his presence could foster it.

Paul closes out his letter to the church with a prayer where he elaborates on his two petitions in verse 10.

1 Thessalonians 3:11-12

¹¹ Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. ¹² May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.

Paul recognizes he can't visit them on his own accord □ **Prays to remove barrier**

Paul recognizes the uselessness of personal efforts toward a revisit unless God "clears the way." At the moment, no return is possible, but he prays for the removal of the barriers.

Paul demonstrates praying about barriers

We see Paul demonstrate to us how he works through barriers and problems we will face on this earth.

Many people today when faced with a problem or barrier, they:

- Make excuses
- Blame someone else rather than taking ownership
- Quit the team

As believers in Christ, we need to go back to the **three ingredients Pastor Steve referred to in chapter 1:3**

We need to have:

- A work that is produced by our faith
- A labor that is prompted by love
- Endurance that is inspired by hope

Believers □ **Greatest team to ever walk the earth** □ **We know the outcome**

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As a body of believers, this is the greatest team that has ever walked the face of the earth. Greater than the Kansas City Chiefs! We already know we are going to win the eternal Superbowl.

Its sure as heck not going to be easy.

The road is narrow and the gate is small but

WE. ARE. DETERMINED.

Why are we determined?

Because we know what is at stake and we know the hope we have in Christ.

We must be alert and aware.

Our enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8)

The enemy is out to kill, steal and destroy (John 10:10a)

But as believers in Christ...

2 Corinthians 4:8-9

⁸We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

When we face barriers in our life:

- Illnesses
- Job changes
- The loss of a loved one

Look to one of the greatest imitators of the faith that we find in scripture.

The Apostle Paul does not give up but he uses his greatest power that he has as a Christian.

Prayer

And when that doesn't work guess what he does

Prays

And when the barrier still doesn't budge, he gets more people to start

Praying

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Worship Team Back Up

1 Thessalonians 3:13

¹³ May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

When Christ returns □ final accounting □ Overflow of love □ no fault is found

When our Lord Jesus Christ returns, He looks forward to the time of final accounting. An overflow of love is the only route to holy conduct in which no fault can be found.

Unless love prevails, selfish motives impede righteous maturity by turning us toward ourselves and away from God and blameless living.

The holiness of God is the ideal we must seek.

“When our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones” □ Christ gathers all + Thes.

“When our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones” refers to the second coming of Christ when he will establish his eternal kingdom. At that time, Christ will gather all believers, those who have died and those who are alive, into one united family under his rule. All believers from all times, including these Thessalonians, will be with Christ in his kingdom.

Family of God □ When we lose a loved one □ Temporarily separated

The beautiful thing about the family of God is that when we lose a loved one we are only temporarily separated from them like Paul was from the church of Thessalonica.

My dad passed away 15 years ago today. I remember how difficult that day was when it happened. The distress I felt. The fact that I knew I would never see him again on this earth. That my kids would never get to see and interact with him. But I was totally wrong. The separation anxiety I had in that moment I came to realize later is temporary. My dad surrendered over his life to Christ as an adult and he resides in Christ's eternal kingdom today. God prepared a place for my dad. One day my family will reunite with him again and we will get to hear some of the best dad jokes in heaven.

God will return one day for his people and as it says in

John 14:3-7

³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going.”

⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

John 10:30

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³⁰ I and the Father are one.

If you haven't made a decision ☐ Freed from the weight

If you haven't made a decision to receive the free gift of salvation that can only be found in Jesus Christ you can be freed from the weight of your, past, present and future sins that you have committed.

Temptation to reject God's plan of salvation for our own. No assurance in man

The temptation is to reject God's kingdom for our own plan of salvation. I can assure you that there is no assurance in a manmade plan.

We must submit to a Lord and Savior.

In 1 month celebrate Good Friday & Easter ☐ Both had to happen for our salvation

In a little over a month, we celebrate Good Friday and Easter Service. Two dates that had to happen in order for us to obtain the salvation offered in the death and resurrection of Christ on the cross.

Death not in vain ☐ Done for our benefit so that we will never perish eternally

His death on the cross was not done in vain but was done on behalf of you and I to give us a hope and a future in which we will never perish.

Consider the work that Christ did on the cross this morning and submit to him not only as your Savior but as your Lord.

Amen

Home Group Questions:

1. Describe the type of separation anxiety Paul was having in 1 Thessalonians 2:17-18. When was a time you felt this same anxiety when you were separated from something or someone?
2. Have you ever been scammed by someone before (phone, email, mail, social media, in person?) In what practical ways is Satan scamming both believers and unbelievers today?
3. How has Satan played on your real needs, possible doubts and potential weaknesses when trying to tempt you in your past?

Read Ephesians 6:10-12

4. How often do you find yourself getting wrapped up in matters that are flesh and blood when the battle is really one of spiritual forces?
5. Who are believers in Christ that you can lean on to gain strength as iron sharpens iron when circumstances are tough? What qualities make them so encouraging?